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TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Roads

Access, Circulation Patterns, Capacity

Salisbury's location gives it access to superior roadway connections. Interstate 95 traverses the town in a north south direction along the Town's western edge and Interstate 495 reaches its northern terminus in Salisbury as it intersects I 95 midway along its route. Two Interstate 95 ramps within Salisbury and another just across the line in Amesbury allow ready access to state and local roads. In addition to the Interstate System, all of the main roads in Salisbury are state highway segments. Together, these roads create a rough grid dividing the town into quadrants. US Route 1 (Lafayette road to the north, Bridge road to the south) runs north south through the center of Salisbury, passing through the historic village center. Route 1A (North End Boulevard) runs along the Atlantic Ocean on the north east edge of town and then turns west midway along the coast (Beach Road) and connects to Route 1 in Salisbury Square. Route 110 (Elm Street) runs east west through the town from Amesbury to Salisbury Square where it completes the crossroads. Another state road, Route 286 (Main, Pike and Collins Street) acts more like a local road and bisects the town in the north west quadrant connecting Route 1 to Interstate 495 and continuing west to Amesbury and northeast to Seabrook, New Hampshire. The majority of Salisbury's traffic occurs on these state roadways while local roads primarily serve the residential population and provide few options for through traffic.

Rabbit Road may be the one exception as it provides access to the town's industrial park as well as the residential population. In the future, it is anticipated that the industrial and

commercial base in this area will increase as a result of the capital improvements to the water and sewer infrastructure and increased marketing and development incentives. With increased economic development in the area, it is possible that a more direct access to I 95 would be beneficial.

[Insert Road Map]

Salisbury's primary roads are all significantly overburdened during the summer tourism peaks, at minimum. Elm Street leading west into Amesbury is regularly congested. Even if lanes could be expanded, it is felt that intersections are so constrained that their limited ability to process traffic would limit the benefits of any widenings. Salisbury Square's offset configuration leads to congestion and lengthy queuing at peak hours throughout the summer. Because of closely adjacent development and other constraints, the intersection cannot be enlarged to receive additional lanes of traffic.

The Beach District and its commercial hub is perhaps the most onerous traffic location in town in the summer. The district which includes free public ocean access at the terminus of Beach Road, a beach front commercial district of small shops, fast food facilities, arcades and bars, a dense and growing residential population, and the State's busiest park is served by only one road. On a typical summer weekend day this can mean in excess of 20,000 automobiles, the overwhelming majority of which then pass through the intersection at Salisbury Square and a limited number of which travel north on Route 1A to New Hampshire. This combination of volume and limited roadway capacity creates conflicts resulting in extremely poor circulation through to Salisbury Square and can cause delays of up to several hours to exit the state reservation.

Mass Highway Department (MHD) has studied the feasibility of providing a new road that would link the Interstate highways with the beach through several design options. Any new road would have some constraints in making its western connections, and any alternative would require construction in highly sensitive marsh areas. All of the options considered are expensive, with new roads and grade separation being the costliest.

It should be noted however, that the seasonally high beach traffic that impacts the town is confined to around ten weekends a year and primarily only impairs the roadways from the beach to just through Salisbury Square, with the most severe impact to guests leaving the State Reservation. To date, the State Department of Highways has not considered the issue serious enough to warrant a road altering reconstruction. Operational procedures may offer a more realistic and economically feasible solution. Traffic details in Salisbury Square are generally in place on summer weekends and assist with traffic flow at this critical intersection. Another detail should be considered at the exit from the State Reservation. Additionally, diverting a percent of the traffic exiting from the Beach District to North End Boulevard, while causing a longer ride for those diverted, would on the whole greatly increase the flow of traffic and relieve the bottleneck within the Reservation.

Traffic Counts

The table below shows that Route 1 carries the consistently highest traffic load with an average daily count of above 15,000. Beach Road, Route110/Elm Street, and Route 286

also show significant traffic through less data is available to understand any seasonal fluctuations. Additional traffic counts are needed to better evaluate high- and off-season traffic on Lafayette Road north and south of Route 286, Route110, Beach Road, and at each Interstate 95 exit.

Table 1: Average Daily Traffic Counts 2001-2006

Avg daily traffic	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
1 N of March Rd			15,461 APR			
1/Bridge St At Newburyport CL	17,211 AUG	15,994 SEP	18,715 AUG	19,215 AUG	25,052 AUG*	16,709 NOV
1/Bridge St At Newburyport CL			15,088 APR			
1/Lafayette Rd At NH State Line	12,680 AUG					
1/Lafayette Rd N of Toll Rd	10,081 AUG					
1/Lafayette Rd S of Toll Rd	15,202 JUN					
1/Lafayette Rd N of Rte 286						
1/Lafayette Rd S of Rte 286					13,048 SEP	
110/Elm St E of Merrill St						15,125 NOV
110/Elm St E of Mudnock Rd			10,898 APR			
1A/Beach Rd W of State Beach Rd					14,090 AUG	
1A/Beach Rd W of Ferry Rd					9,451 OCT	
1A/Beach Rd E of Dock Ln	20,973 JUL**					
1A/N. End Blvd N of Central St		10,214 JUL			8,926 AUG	
1A/N. End Blvd. New Hampshire Line						
286/Collins Rd E of Rte 1(at NHSL)	19,616 JUL**	18,861 JUL			10,583 SEP	
286/Forest St W of Rte 1						
286/Toll Rd Ext. NW of Main St						
Broadway E of Rte 1A						
Cable Ave S of Broadway				4,901 JUL		
Central Ave N of Broadway			1,335 JUL			
Cushing Rd N of Rte 110					558 JUL	
Ferry Rd S of Rte 1A/Beach Rd						1,260 NOV

Source: Merrimack Valley Planning Commission: Traffic Counts Table

**denotes construction in the area, **denotes counts on special weekends*

Condition

Aside from their limited capacity to handle seasonally high traffic volumes the roads in Salisbury are in generally fair condition. State owned roads are maintained by the Massachusetts Highway Department. (Including snow removal and salting?) The Town takes a pro-active approach to the maintenance of town roads as funding allows with an on-going program that provides an asphalt over-lay coat to a small percentage of the town's roads each year. The length of road that is over-laid each year is dependent on the amount of funding and the cost for materials. Ideally, 5% of the town's roads would be repaved each year to allow all to be repaved within their 20 year expected life span. The Town also has an on-going capital improvement program that rebuilds roads from the drainage layer up. Generally this type of re-building only occurs in conjunction with other capital infrastructure projects such as water and sewer lines.

Roads in the area of Salisbury Beach may be the most in need of improvement. Some of the secondary residential roads that serve the beach area, such as Railroad Avenue are simply not wide enough for current uses, including through traffic, parking, pedestrians and bicycles. An evaluation of the town's roads and sidewalks is needed to address the issue of capacity and safety.

Flooding also has a substantial impact on many Salisbury Roads. List areas that are frequently flooded. Closed? Improved? What is needed to address the issue?

Current or Planned Improvements

Route 286, also known as Main Street, Pike Street and Collins Street is heavily traveled, with some of the highest traffic counts in town and is problematic due to a series of oddly angled intersections. The State Highway Department is currently studying these to improve their safety and efficiency. As the most direct route leading from Interstate 95 to Seabrook, New Hampshire where a cluster of regional retail is located, this road is likely to require on-going improvements. In addition, at the Route's nexus with Route 1 has capacity and the likelihood of future commercial or mixed-use development.

There is some concern by the Department of Public Works that coastal beach roads may prove to be a maintenance issue in the future as the State requires no impervious surfaces on much of the beach district land now being considered for development. Unless an impervious pavement is found to replace the gravel dressing currently considered for this application, the DPW could be faced with maintaining gravel roads, which could be both time consuming and unsustainable. Impervious pavements (both impervious asphalt and concrete) should be studied, for future application.)

Roadway improvements that are funded in whole or part by federal funds must be included in the State's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), as the regions transportation planning organization prepares a 4-year Transportation Improvement Program each year as part of the ongoing transportation planning process in the Merrimack Valley and the Lawrence-Haverhill urbanized area. The TIP is based on a four-year period of programming projects. Without such a listing, Federal Highway funds cannot be expended by the

Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) on local or State projects. Similarly, the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) can only receive funds for projects listed in the TIP. To become listed the project must be approved for funding by Mass Highway and must:

- conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Air Quality in accordance with the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), giving special consideration to "regionally significant" projects
- Demonstrate fiscal constraint for all projects listed in the TIP
- Estimate future funding sources for operating and maintaining the current transportation network as well as the costs of capital improvements
- Present the status of projects from the previous TIP
- Describe the status of Merrimack Valley Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) appearing in the SIP
- Undergo a public involvement period

However, Approval of a project by the does not constitute a commitment of funds. MassHighway decides whether to fund a project in a given year by considering such factors as cost, availability of money in the project's funding program, project status (how far along the project is in the design process), and the project's priority. Given the long and competitive process required to get transportation improvement projects listed in the TIP, it is critical that this be an on-going priority for the Town for improving its transportation infrastructure.

Parking

Salisbury owns and operates one municipal parking lot in the Beach District that accommodates about 750 automobiles. 87 of those are metered and are controlled by the Salisbury Police Department. The remaining spaces are managed by the Department of Public Works. Parking fees are generally collected only during special events in the early season months of May and June. During high season from late June through Labor Day, day fees per car are collected from 8 AM until 10 PM. The lot is generally full during the day on summer weekends, but otherwise offers more capacity than is needed.

Off season the lot is used minimally by businesses and residents. In the winter, the parking lot is occasionally used for snow storage.

Due to the long season of low activity for the municipal lot, the Town is considering offering a limited number of year round leases to local residents and businesses. The goal would be to create a positive cash flow without substantially impacting the Beach District's capacity to offer public parking. A study of new development and expected parking demand is needed to help the town determine an appropriate course of action.

The idea of creating a commuter park and ride parking lot within a ramp at the I-95 exchange is also worth considering. The City of Newburyport's park and ride facility that serves multiple bus companies is over capacity. A new lot in Salisbury could provide an additional bus stop that could capture some of the commuters from north of Newburyport as well as provide a more immediate commuter connection for Salisbury's residents. This satellite parking could also be coupled with a priority shuttle service to the beach in the summertime.

On-Street Parking

Where is it allowed? Beach District, Salisbury Square, within neighborhoods etc.

Pedestrian & Bike Ways

Communities around the country are discovering that pedestrian and bicycling ways and facilities are powerful tools for improving the overall quality of life for their residents. The role sidewalks and trails play in knitting neighborhoods and districts together, in reducing dependency on automobiles and increasing options for healthy recreation is well documented. With increased length of trails and increased access to varied resources and services, trails also bring about incremental economic gains, as visitors support local businesses and businesses develop to support the trail users.

Sidewalks in Salisbury are generally clustered in the Village Square and in the Beach District and occur haphazardly throughout other areas. They are in poor condition having received no maintenance for well over a decade and are noticeably absent in many critical areas. The Town's leaders and residents have expressed interest in dramatically

improving sidewalks throughout town, making the time right for developing a sidewalk system that maximizes connectivity and supports businesses and neighborhoods. This will require a commitment to both capital improvements and on-going maintenance, but is at the heart of developing sustainable neighborhoods and commercial centers. Developing a comprehensive sidewalk program will require mapping existing sidewalks and appraising their condition. It will also require creating a new map of desired sidewalk routes that take into consideration locations of parks, school, shops and other destinations that could be accessed by pedestrians given adequate access and infrastructure. The system does not need to include sidewalks along both sides of all streets or even be available on all streets. They should be considered where the town would like to encourage walking, and where the proximity of destinations (residential and businesses) make the option of walking reasonable and desirable.

[Insert Sidewalk Map, if available]

Salisbury has recently found great support for rail trails in town and envisions trails from New Hampshire into Newburyport and south, and from Amesbury and points west to the Beach. Some trails already exist, others are in development and still others are being planned. However; together Salisbury's Coastal Trails will provide an integral link in the Coastal Trails Network – a developing 30 mile system of bicycle and pedestrian trails linking unique coastal features, town centers, neighborhoods and transportation hubs.

Salisbury has one existing on road bicycle trail and one planned. Mudnock Road Link is a quiet 1.6 mile route that links a central Salisbury neighborhood to Salisbury Square and to the Ghost Point Trail. Beach Road bike lanes, planned for implementation in 2008 will be wide, marked bike lanes running 2.2 miles from Salisbury Square to Salisbury Beach.

Salisbury's first improved off road trail is the Salisbury Point Ghost Trail an improved one mile gravel trail that provides easy walking or biking through quiet woodlands. The Town's second trail, Old Eastern Marsh Trail is under design and will connect Salisbury Square through the Mudnock Road Trail to Newburyport. Unimproved, but passable today it stretches 1.4 miles between the Merrimack River and Mudnock Road offering easy walking or mountain bicycling through beautiful salt marshes with unspoiled vistas and varied wildlife.

[Insert Trail Map]

Water Transportation

Historically, the towns of Salisbury and Newburyport were connected with ferry service, shuttling both freight and passengers between the neighbors. However, with the installation of the Route 1 bridge across the Merrimack in the early 1900s ferry service was discontinued and has never been re-established. Today waterfront communities throughout the country are again looking at their waterways to provide them with unique venues and services that others value. From waterfront walkways and parks, to docks and bridges redeveloped as commercial venues, to water transportation, each of these

elements helps create an identity and a sense of place that is memorable and marketable. Water transportation should be part of what can be experienced in Salisbury. It should be studied for feasibility both at the oceanfront and along the river within a network of neighboring coastal and waterway communities.

The 2004 Community Development Plan recommends introducing a seasonal ferry service from downtown Newburyport to the dock at the State Reservation and/or a new pier a the Beach Center to leverage both the urbane and the seashore aspects of Salisbury's location. Initial inquiries with the State Department of Conservation and Recreation regarding services using the State Reservation facilities have been well received and should be followed up since the site offers both parking and a large potential customer base.

[Insert Map showing waterways and water transportation elements]

Salisbury currently has a town dock at Rings Island and it is considering adding a second near Bridge Marina on an MBTA leased site. Both of these sites however lack parking which would be a critical element for ferry service. However, a smaller river tour service could be developed providing recreational opportunities along the Merrimack for dining or site seeing.

There are two public boat launch ramps in Salisbury and three commercial marinas. The public facilities include the Black Rock Creek ramps owned by the State and operated by

the State Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the town dock at Rings Island. Black Rock Creek is located in the Salisbury Beach State Reservation at the mouth of the Merrimack River. The facility has two boat ramps, one with concrete lanes and a combined launch dock/staging dock. It is suitable for large boats while the other ramp is reserved for jet skis and other small water crafts. The site contains about 30 parking spaces and trailers can park along the access road when the site is crowded. The only cost is an entry fee to the Reservation at $7 a day or $35 a season. The site is very busy between Memorial and Labor Days.

The town dock at Rings Island is usable for docking only at high tide. However It has the capacity for up to about 30 dinghies. The small gravel parking lot also limits the number of users. Dredging would be required to make this site available through the tidal cycle.

Commercial Marinas provide services to hundreds of boats and are a substantial economic resource in Salisbury. Bridge Marina at 179 Bridge Road, adjacent to the Route 1 Bridge is well positioned with good parking and visibility. The facility has 116 boat slips and offers dockside and storage, gas and fuel sales, marine store, boat hauling, restaurant, fiberglass boat repair, tackle shop, and charter fishing. The water depth at the end of the dock is 15 feet at mean low water. The maximum size vessel that the facility can handle is 50 feet.

Ring Island Marina at 16 First Street has the capacity to dock 3,000 linear feet or approximately 120 boats. The facility offers showers and restrooms, marine office, ship's

store, electric power at slips, hauling, repairs, winter storage and parking.. The depth of water at the dock varies from 4 feet to 13 feet at mean low water.

Cove Marina at 35 Friedenfels is directly across Route One from Bridge Marina. It slips vessels up to 48 Feet within 142 slips and 14 moorings. The deep water slips offer water and power, high-speed wireless internet access and cable television. Cove Marina also has restrooms and showers, lit parking, laundry facilities and a picnic and play area.

The Town of Salisbury Harbor Plan, substantially complete in July of 2007 includes a breadth of information on Salisbury's waterways and provides a great deal of information pertinent to the discussion of water transportation, including feasibility of sites for dock development. The purpose of the plan is to guide decision making by the Salisbury Harbor Commission. The Plan provides information that can be used as the basis for decisions on development proposals and capital investments affecting the waterfront and waterways of the town. Ten priority actions have been identified from the Salisbury Harbor Plan. They are:

[List Priorities]

Public Transportation

Type, Access, Capacity

Salisbury is a member of the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) a regional service agency representing the towns of northeast Massachusetts. MRVTA operates a bus line during July and August that stops at Salisbury Beach on its way to its terminus at Hampton Beach. The bus originates in Lawrence and has stops in Methuen,

Haverhill and Amesbury, but does not have a scheduled stop to accept passengers within Salisbury. The service runs in bound to Salisbury and Hampton beaches each 10-20 minutes from Lawrence between 8:15 to 9:40 and outbound from Hampton Beach between 1:50 to 3:15 Monday through Friday.

The nearest bus and rail services for Salisbury residents and workers are in Newburyport. Public bus services are located in the park and ride lot of Interstate 95, 2 1/2 miles south of Salisbury. Buses from Newburyport provide service to multiple locations in Boston including a dedicated bus to Logan Airport. Rail service is available at the commuter rail station within 5 miles of the Salisbury/Newburyport border. Commuter rail provides access to multiple north shore stations as well as Boston's North Station and subway system.

The 2004 Community Develop Plan sites a recent New Hampshire study of the feasibility of reintroducing rail service to Portsmouth NH showing that the option is not economically viable. It has been accorded a low priority despite some local interest along the New Hampshire seacoast. The re-establishment of this commuter service should be supported and could be feasible with increased development in both Portsmouth and Salisbury.

Other forms of public transportation should be considered particularly to respond to high seasonal traffic volumes. Shuttle services, with a history in Salisbury, may be one strategy to reconsider. A shuttle service could be an effective way to connect the State Reservation population to the beaches commercial district. It could be instituted along

Reservation Road, or a form of beach craft or alternative vehicle could be used for travel along the beach.

Creating a regionally accessible park and ride lot a discussed above could also be considered to both increase commuter opportunities and to provide satellite parking for shuttles to the beach for special events and on weekends.

References

Community Development Plan, 2004

Town of Salisbury Harbor Plan, Draft, 2007

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Web Site, August 2007

Merrimack Valley Regional Transportation Authority Web Site, July 2007

Coastal Trails Web Site, July 2007